



Volunteering with Cornwall Council Policy

September 2014

Communities and Organisational
Development Directorate

1. Introduction

This policy describes the role of volunteers in service delivery and sets out the terms governing their engagement and ongoing relationship with the Council.

A volunteer is not an employee of Cornwall Council and there is no binding contractual relationship between volunteers and the Council. Volunteers are not a replacement or substitute for paid employees.

2. Policy Statement

A volunteer is someone who contributes their time, skills and experience freely in the support of the delivery of services to the community.

The Council acknowledges the significant role that volunteers play both in supporting service delivery and the role of volunteering in promoting community wellbeing. It offers a wide variety of volunteering opportunities across numerous services for people with particular skills, experience or interests. These opportunities may be for short periods but some can develop into enduring relationships between particular volunteers and the Council. The Council is committed to ensuring that consistent standards are applied to volunteering opportunities with the Council. The Council will:

- Define and agree the scope of the roles undertaken by volunteers
- Respect the freedom of choice of volunteers about when they engage in volunteering activities
- Ensure that there is open and fair access to volunteering opportunities and that a consistent framework is utilised for the recruitment of volunteers
- Provide consistent terms of engagement for volunteers across all Council services
- Ensure the safety of volunteers and those they come into contact with in the course of their role
- Support volunteers to develop their own skills and knowledge and to help and support our communities

3. Scope

This policy applies to volunteers engaged in supporting the delivery of Council services. It does not apply to services delivered by agents of the Council, including contractors, alternate service delivery organisations and maintained schools, where separate arrangements will apply.

The policy does not apply to:

- Volunteers who are active within communities and not managed by council services e.g. Clean Cornwall participants who volunteer their time to clean up their local public spaces.
- Work experience, apprenticeships and student placements
- Volunteer or friends groups such as friends of museums and libraries
- Council employees volunteering for other groups and organisations (covered by the Employee Volunteering Policy)

4. Policy details

Volunteers are expected to comply with relevant Council policies whilst engaged in volunteering with the Council. An appropriate induction will be provided to all volunteers to ensure that they are aware of the Council's expectations in this respect.

4.1 Safeguarding

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and we all have a responsibility to ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members in our society.

The Council's safeguarding policy applies to all volunteering opportunities where the volunteer engages with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be covered in the initial induction and further training will be provided wherever appropriate.

4.2 Recruitment

Volunteers will usually be engaged through one of two routes. A prospective volunteer may approach a service to offer their time, skills and experience for example to gain experience in working in a specific role, or to complete a community aspect to an award, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh. Alternatively, a service may identify one or more volunteering opportunities and actively seek to recruit volunteers.

In both cases the engagement of volunteers should adhere to safe recruitment principles as established through the Council's corporate recruitment and selection process. It will include:

- Provision of information to prospective volunteers about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Completion of a Volunteer Recruitment Form
- A face-to-face interview
- Appropriate checks prior to engagement including references, criminal record and health checks

Where volunteers are recruited from another institution or organisation, assurance from the institution or organisation should be obtained that the person has been subject to a proper recruitment process that includes the necessary checks and safeguards.

An enhanced criminal record check must be undertaken for all positions in regulated activity as currently defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (and as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). Cornwall Council undertakes criminal record checks for appointment to roles for which a check is required. The [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) provides clear guidelines relating to posts that meet the definition of regulated activity and that are eligible for an enhanced disclosure.

4.3 Support and supervision

All volunteers will have a manager or supervisor with responsibility for agreeing the scope of their role, providing an induction and appropriate ongoing support, ensuring that volunteers are aware of and operate within the scope of relevant Council policies and procedures and resolving any issues that arise in the course of the volunteering relationship.

4.4 Coordination

Some services may nominate a volunteer coordinator to:

- Provide advice and assistance regarding the recruitment of volunteers
- Ensure consistent application of this policy and related procedures
- Serve as a single point of contact within the service/directorate for the general coordination of volunteering
- Coordinate ongoing supervision and support
- Resolve any issues arising in the course of the volunteering relationship

The volunteer coordinator will maintain an overview of the volunteer programme within their service or directorate and arrange regular

meetings with volunteers to share information, feedback progress, and monitor and review the programme.

4.5 Induction

All volunteers shall receive an induction into the organisation and their role in advance of, or on, the first day of the placement. They shall receive an induction folder containing:

- General information about Cornwall Council and the directorate or service within which they are volunteering
- This volunteering policy
- The Council's Code of Conduct which outlines the standards of behaviour that volunteers are expected to comply with
- The volunteering agreement
- A volunteer role profile detailing tasks and expectations
- Details of where and how they can access the Council's policies and procedures that apply to their volunteering role

4.6 The Volunteering Agreement

The Volunteering Agreement sets out the Council's commitment to providing quality volunteer placements and what we ask in return from our volunteers.

4.7 Training

Cornwall Council will match the time, skills and experience of volunteers to suitable volunteering opportunities and ensure appropriate information, training and support is provided to enhance the relationship.

4.8 Reimbursement

Volunteers are unpaid. However, the Council will reimburse volunteers for approved out-of-pocket expenses (this does not include lunch) which are appropriately receipted in accordance with prevailing policies applicable to employees. All such payments shall be made through ERP.

Voluntary work should not affect entitlement to any benefit. Details are available from [Jobcentre Plus](#), [Volunteer Cornwall](#) or [Volunteering England](#).

4.9 Insurance

- a) **Public liability** - volunteers operate on behalf of the Council and are covered by the Council's [public liability insurance](#). This protects volunteers against loss or injury caused by negligence

on the part of the Council. It also protects the public against loss or damage to property caused by the negligence of anyone acting on our authority, including volunteers.

- b) **Personal injury** - the Council's [personal injury insurance](#) covers volunteers in the event of injury resulting from an assault while carrying out activities on behalf of the Council. As personal accident cover is limited to assault, volunteers should be advised to take out their own personal accident insurance.

4.10 Volunteer drivers

Volunteer drivers must comply with the Council's driving at work policy. [Fleet insurance](#) covers volunteer drivers when driving council owned vehicles. Employees using their own vehicles on Cornwall Council business have the responsibility to ensure that they are properly insured (business use endorsement), are the holder of a valid driving licence, the vehicle is taxed, has a current MOT test and is maintained to meet statutory legal requirements.

The Council's standard mileage scheme will apply where personal cars are used for business purposes. In addition, volunteers will be paid for Home to Placement reasonable mileage costs at 0.40p per mile.

4.11 Health and safety

Cornwall Council has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should at all times follow the Council's health and safety policies and procedures. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers should not act outside of their authorised area of work. Volunteers should report all accidents to their supervisor.

4.12 Clothing and ID cards

Under normal circumstances volunteers will be provided with a Cornwall Council Volunteer ID card. The Council will supply adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), if appropriate, and any other suitable safe equipment, together with appropriate instruction. Uniforms and ID cards must be returned at the end of a placement.

4.13 Specific requirements for volunteers who are under 18 years of age

Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age. Before accepting a volunteer application from an under 18 year old, the consent of a parent or guardian must be obtained. Clear information regarding

the activities involved must be provided to the parent or guardian and the volunteer.

Volunteers who are under 18 years of age must not volunteer before 7am or after 7pm or for more than two hours on any school day or Sunday. Enhanced supervision is required and robust safeguarding measures should be in place.

Volunteers who are under 18 should also have a minimum of 2 weeks free from volunteering activities during the school holidays.

Risk Assessments must be conducted and must take into account the potential psychological and physical immaturity, inexperience and lack of awareness of risks of volunteers who are under eighteen years of age. When conducting a risk assessment the Corporate Risk Assessment Guidance should be taken into account.

4.13 Equality and Diversity

Cornwall Council has an Equalities and Diversity framework which applies to all paid employees and volunteers.

Cornwall Council will actively encourage volunteering through promotion to relevant networks and support groups and all literature will be written in plain English.

Equalities monitoring forms will be included with Volunteer Agreements.

4.14 Confidentiality

Volunteers are likely to become aware of confidential information about the Council, its employees, customers and suppliers. Volunteers should not disclose this information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure.

Personal information about volunteers, such as name, contact details and records of volunteering for the organisation, must be stored in line with the [Data Protection Act 1998](#).

Volunteers are not protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which covers whistle blowing as part of employment law. They can use the Council's whistle blowing policy if necessary, but they will not receive statutory protection or compensation as they are not

Council employees. If a volunteer has a concern about the running of a project or the organisation, they should speak to a senior manager, their safeguarding coordinator or any voluntary sector representative in confidence.

4.15 Social Media

'Social Media' is the term used for the current wave of online tools, websites and interactive media that enable users to interact with each other in various ways, through sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests.

Volunteers must recognise their responsibilities, be aware of safeguarding issues and of the risks of the use of social media as identified in the Social Media Policy.

5. Dealing with problems

If there are concerns about the behaviour of a volunteer, these will be examined in accordance with the principles of natural justice. The volunteer will be advised of the concerns and have an opportunity to respond to them.

Volunteer Cornwall, PCDT, [Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change](#), or [Volunteering England](#) can provide support, advice and mediation. Or contact the HR help desk on 01872 323500 Option 5 or email: hrhelpdesk@cornwall.gov.uk.

6. Consultation and engagement

This policy has been developed in consultation with volunteers, directorate representatives and other interested organisations and individuals.

7. Communicating the policy

All employees with responsibility for engaging with volunteers, and volunteers will have access to this policy via the intranet. The policy will also be circulated via team meetings, Team Talk and the intranet.

8. Breaches and non-compliance

Non-compliance with this policy by volunteers may result in the termination of their volunteering agreement. Non-compliance by employees may result in sanctions under the Council's Disciplinary and Capability Procedure.

9. Further information

In addition to the communication methods referred to above, advice, information and guidance in relation to implementation of the policy can be obtained from the People Management, Development and Wellbeing (PMDW) Service.

10. Evaluation and review

The provisions of this policy will be subject to regular review and as required by changes in legislation and guidance. The policy will be monitored under the PMDW policy review framework.

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